

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02

AID-05 IGA-02 /065 W

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R 061950Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN SALVADOR 5529

DEPT PASS USAOS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, PBOR, PINT, ES, HO

SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR AND RATIFICATION OF THE MEDIATION PROTOCOL

REF: SAN SALVADOR 4804

1. SUMMARY - PRESIDENT MOLINA MAINTAINS HIS POLICY NOT TO HAVE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RATIFY THE MEDIATION PROTOCOL UNTIL AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL POLITICAL CAMPAIGN. HE SAYS HE FEARS THE ISSUE MIGHT BE USED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT IN THE CAMPAIGN. THE OPPOSITION INSISTS IT HAS NO INTENTION OF RAISING THE ISSUE. FOREIGN MINISTER BORGONOVO IS SAID TO WANT TO REACH AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE OPPOSITION, BUT HASN'T DONE SO. END SUMMARY.

2. THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE PROGRESS IN THE HONDURAN-SALVADORAN NEGOTIATION PROCESS SINCE OCTOBER 6 WHEN THE TWO COUNTRIES INITIALED THE WASHINGTON PROTOCOL WHICH CALLS FOR SELECTION OF A MEDIATOR TO SIT IN ON FUTURE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS. AS REPORTED IN REFTEL, PRESIDENT MOLINA TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE GOES HAD DECIDED TO DELAY RATIFICATION BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY UNTIL THE REGIME WAS CERTAIN ITS POLITICAL

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OPPOSITION WOULD NOT TRY TO USE THE ISSUE IN THE PRESENT

PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION CAMPAIGN. THOUGH UNSTATED, THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION WOULD MEAN DELAY AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE FEBRUARY 20, 1977 ELECTION, AND POSSIBLY NOT UNTIL THE NEW PRESIDENT'S JULY INAUGURATION. A MESSAGE ALONG THESE LINES WAS REPORTEDLY CONVEYED TO THE GOH AT THE PROTOCOL SIGNING CEREMONY BY FORMIN BORGONOVO.

3. TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER MOLINA'S FEAR IS JUSTIFIED, I.E., THE OPPOSITION HAS AN INTENTION TO RAISE THE ISSUE IN THE CAMPAIGN, THE AMBASSADOR MET ON DECEMBER 2 WITH THE UNO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE, COL. ERNESTO CLARAMOUNT, AND HIS PRO-CIVIL PDC ADVISORS. THE OPPOSITION STATED WITHOUT EQUIVOCATION THAT IT DID NOT WANT TO PERCEIVE THE BILATERAL DISPUTE AS AN ELECTORAL WEAPON TO BE USED AGAINST THE MOLINA GOVERNMENT. THEY SAID THAT THERE WERE MORE THAN ENOUGH OTHER ISSUES SUCH AS CORRUPTION, MISADMINISTRATION AND INCOMPETENCE. THEY ALSO SPOKE OF NO INTEREST IN JEOPARDIZING THE CHANCES OF RESOLVING THE DISPUTE, WHICH THEY BELIEVE HAS LASTED FAR TOO LONG ALREADY.

4. IN NOVEMBER 18 DISCUSSION WITH A POLOFF, ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER RICARDO CASTANEDA SAID THAT FORMIN BORGONOVO, ANXIOUS TO AVOID THE NEGATIVE IMPRESSION THAT EL SALVADOR IS DRAGGING ITS FEET ON RATIFICATION, PLANNED TO APPROACH THE OPPOSITION TO WORK OUT AN INFORMAL AGREEMENT THAT NEITHER SIDE USE THE ISSUE IN THE CAMPAIGN.

5. CONFIRMING CASTANEDA'S ASSERTION, CLARAMOUNT'S VICE-PRESIDENTIAL RUNNING MATE, ANTONIO MORALES EHRLICH, SAID THAT HE HAD RECEIVED WORD OF A CALL FROM BORGONOVO. SUSPECTING THAT HONDURAS MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT, MORALES SAID HE CALLED BORGONOVO BACK, BUT THE MINISTER WAS OUT. BORGONOVO HAS NOT RETURNED HIS CALL, ACCORDING TO MORALES EHRLICH. ASKED WHY THE OPPOSITION, IF IT WANTS TO GET THE BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS GOING AGAIN, COULDN'T PUBLICLY VOLUNTEER NOT TO RAISE THE HONDURAS ISSUE, CLARAMOUNT AND HIS ADVISORS ASKED THEM THEY SHOULD WHEN PRESIDENT MOLINA CONSISTENTLY HAS SHUNNED CONTACT AND DIALOGUE WITH THEM THROUGHOUT HIS TERM. MOLINA WOULD HAVE TO MAKE THE APPROACH BEFORE THEY WOULD ISSUE SUCH AN ASSURANCE, CLARAMOUNT
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SAID. HE REPEATED HOWEVER THAT THE UNO DID NOT PLAN TO USE THE ISSUE UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES.

6. COMMENT - IT'S DIFFICULT TO SAY WHETHER MOLINA'S REASON FOR NOT RATIFYING THE PROTOCOL IS AS HE DESCRIBED IT TO THE AMBASSADOR. IT IS HARD TO SEE HOW THE OPPOSITION COULD GAIN MUCH ADVANTAGE BY RAISING ANY ASPECT OF THE PROTOCOL PROPOSAL,

OTHER THAN TO PREDICT AN EVENTUAL LOSS OF NATIONAL TERRITORY
TIN A "SELL OUT". SUCH A CHARGE WOULD BE UNCHARACTERISITC FOR
THE UNO WHICH HAS SELDOM MENTIONED THE HONDURAS DISPUTE
IN PAST CAMPAIGNS. THE PRESIDENT MUST REALIZE THIS. IT
IS EQUALLY DIFFICULT, HOWEVER, TO SEE ANY OTHER VALID OR REASON-
ABLE MOTIVE. MOLINA MUST REALIZE THAT EL SALVADOR'S INTER-
NATIONAL IMAGE IS SUFFERING FOR APPEARING TO BE LAGGARD IN THE
SEARCH FOR PEACE. CASTANEDA WAS FULLY CONGNIZANT THAT UNDER
SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES TIME IS ON THE HONDURAN SIDE, AND SAID
THAT HE HAS SOME HOPES THAT THE INTERNAL POLITICAL CONNECTION
COULD BE REMOVED AND THE AGREEMENT RATIFIED BY EARLY JANUARY.
END COMMENT.
LOZANO

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